



# Preventing Memory Loss

While memory loss cannot be completely prevented, there are a number of steps that may help reduce the risk of developing memory problems.

- **Lower cholesterol and high blood pressure.** Recent studies suggest that vascular diseases (heart disease and stroke) may contribute to the development of Alzheimer's Disease and dementia.
- **Manage stress.** Stress releases a hormone called cortisol, which can damage the hippocampus if stress is unrelieved. The hippocampus is a part of the brain that plays important roles in long-term memory.
- **Do not smoke or abuse alcohol.** According to research, smokers perform worse than nonsmokers in studies of memory and thinking skills. Heavy alcohol use can also impair memory.
- **Get regular exercise.** Physical activity may help maintain blood flow to the brain and reduce risk factors associated with dementia.
- **Maintain healthy eating habits.** Eating vegetables may help slow down the rate of cognitive change in adults. Green leafy vegetables have been studied to have the strongest association with slowing the rate of cognitive decline.
- **Get enough sleep.** Sleep is important for memory consolidation. Sleep disorders impact concentration and memory.
- **Maintain social interactions.** Social interaction can help reduce stress levels and has been associated with a lower risk of dementia.
- **Use memory tools.** Keep day planners, calendars, to-do lists and notes to assist with tasks.
- **Keep the brain active.** Experts suggest practicing a variety of activities that challenge the brain, including reading, writing, playing word and board games, and learning a new skill or hobby.

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